

VANPOOL VOICES



SUPPORTING METRO VANPOOLERS

May 2002

SODO & Duwamish: Rev'd Up for Vanpools

Vanpooling is rolling into the industrial area south of downtown Seattle in a big way this year. The Manufacturing Industrial Council of Seattle (MIC), an advocate for local industrial businesses, is focusing attention on transportation and road improvements in SODO ('south of the dome') and Duwamish. MIC, recognizing the need to reduce commute congestion sought, and was awarded, funding from the Economic Development Council's *Commuter Challenge* program to start a ridesharing project. At a March 15th reception hosted by MIC, Seattle mayor Greg Nickels spoke favorably of vanpooling's role in reducing traffic.

MIC has chosen King County Metro's individualized ridematching service, Rideshare Plus, to boost vanpooling in SODO and Duwamish. On April 1, Rideshare Plus began helping the area's 12,000+ employees learn about vanpooling's advantages and how to form vanpools. New vanpoolers are eligible for special financial incentives. Rideshare Plus also helps riders get the most out of RideshareOnline.com, the Puget

Sound area's largest ridematching resource. Randall Williams, the Rideshare Plus project representative, uses online ridematching

and other database tools to help gather ridership for new and existing vanpools in the area.



Photo courtesy of J. Lewis VanDeMark
Grace Krunican, Director of Seattle Transportation and Greg Nickels, Mayor of Seattle.

on the road. Refer friends working in SODO or Duwamish to Randall Williams at (206) 263-5267 for rideshare assistance.

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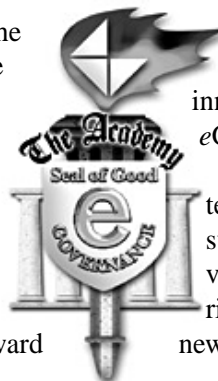
VanShare, an innovative vanpool service providing critically needed rider connections for transit, rail and ferries, is of special interest to this area's commuters. This service provides reasonably priced 'short hop' connections to, and/or from, transit stations, ferry docks and rail stations. VanShare helps area commuters reach employment locations that are slightly off the 'beaten path' and encourages the use of rail, ferry, water taxi, and transit service. (See VanShare article on page 3)

Thanks to MIC's leadership, and the energy of area employers, vanpooling's future is in high gear in SODO and Duwamish. Please help us get this program

RideshareOnline.com Receives National Recognition

RideshareOnline.com has contributed to more riders joining more vanpools since its debut one year ago. Now its success as an online ridematching service has been recognized by two prestigious organizations. ITS (Intelligent Transportation Systems) America has selected RideshareOnline.com from 75 nominees as one of the 25 finalists contending for 7 awards. The

awards will be announced at the ITS America conference at the end of April. In addition, the National Academy of Public Administration and the National Association of Counties have selected RideshareOnline.com as a winner of the First Annual Seal of Good eGovernance Award



Program. The Award recognizes best practices and innovation in county-level eGovernance initiatives.

Despite the high praise, the true test of RideshareOnline.com's success still rests with how often vanpools use the service to find riders and its ability to attract to new users seeking to share the ride.

Throw Open the Doors to New Riders with “*Ticket to Ride 2002*”

Ticket to Ride has made that first contact with potential riders so much easier for a lot of Metro vanpoolers. Anyone who might be even just a little bit interested in vanpooling can use the ticket, good for up to three times, and try out one of your group’s vacant seats **FREE**. No obligation, and minimal paperwork.

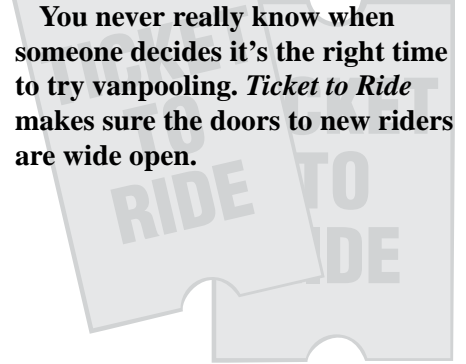
Many riders have tried vanpooling with this free offer, and many have stayed. This 2002 version of Metro’s free outreach offer is now available through the year and until further

notice. So, grab the opportunity to put those vacant seats to work for your group.

Enclosed along with this issue of VanPool Voices are up-dated *Ticket to Ride* flier tickets that anyone in your vanpool can hand over to potential new riders to encourage them to try out empty seats in your van. Also enclosed, is a cover letter that runs through simple instructions about how to use the ticket and return the used tickets to Metro. Go ahead and make additional ticket copies and

distribute them to as many people as you wish. Your VSR is happy to send you more, just ask.

You never really know when someone decides it’s the right time to try vanpooling. *Ticket to Ride* makes sure the doors to new riders are wide open.



RideshareOnline.com Logo Installation

Logos depicting RideshareOnline.com, Metro’s awarding winning do-it-yourself ride-matching tool, began appearing on VanPool vans in March. The logos are being installed as vans cycle through service centers for routine preventative maintenance. The 800 van fleet should be completed by early fall.

Placing logos on the van allows the public to realize the link between RideshareOnline.com and the vanpool alternative to driving alone. Easier to remember than the string of phone numbers, 206-625-4500, Rideshare

Online.com will help bring new riders to vanpools and carpools.

Highly reflective, the logos are placed on both sides and the rear of the van. Not only will this help attract attention to ridesharing, the logos will enhance the visibility of the van at night and other low-light situations.

RideshareOnline.com is an important tool for vanpools seeking new riders, so logon and see who is out there.



Spanning the next three to four years, Bellevue is set to begin its biggest road project since Interstate 405 was completed in the 1960s. Access Downtown, as the project is known, will complete a series of local street improvements in and around downtown Bellevue and specific freeway enhancements at key interchanges. Access Downtown is an alliance between Sound Transit, City of Bellevue, Washington State Department of Transportation, King County Metro and the

Federal Highway Administration. The first project to get going is the Southeast 8th Street Interchange beginning April 1, 2002.

To help minimize the impacts of construction on the commute, the City of Bellevue and King County Metro Rideshare Operations are offering free, individualized ridematching services and special incentives to employees in downtown Bellevue through the Rideshare Plus program. During the year, Rideshare Plus staff will be making regular visits to major employment sites in

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VanShare Approaches One-Year Anniversary, Shows Promising Results



Designed to bring new users to public transportation, King County Metro Rideshare Operations' VanShare program debuted in April 2001. Twenty-five retired VanPool Program vans now carry over 100 VanShare users on some part of their daily commute.

The concept of VanShare is simple – use a King County Metro van to connect customers to public transportation facilities (park and ride lots, ferry terminals and train stations) and from those same facilities to work sites. By providing a transportation product that bridges the gap between the transportation hub and the workplace many new commuters are now able to choose transit instead of driving alone.

VanShare is also showing promising results when it originates from a home origin and links the commuter to the transportation hub. As a neighborhood-based product, VanShare promotes the maximum use of facilities such as park and ride lots by freeing up parking spaces which were formerly occupied by SOVs.

In partnership with neighboring transit agencies, special applications of VanShare are being tested among ferry commuters. Using VanShare to connect to the ferry portion of the commute allows passengers to “walk-on” the boat freeing valuable spaces on the car deck for high occupancy and commercial vehicles. In summary, VanShare increases transportation choices, maximizes the use of existing assets, and delivers a service with a minimum of administrative and operating cost. For additional information on VanShare, call Jim Greenwald, VanShare Project Manager, at 206-684-1928 or email Jim at jim.greenwald@metrokc.gov.

Law of the Universe Seat Belts Reduce Injury and Death

Metro VanPool commuters traveled over 800,000,000 miles in the last 10 years, and did so with remarkable safety. Serious accidents involving bodily injury have been very infrequent even though this travel took place during heavy peak-hour traffic in one of the nation's most congested areas.

The seriousness of injuries sustained in VanPool accidents is hugely different when compared between those properly seat-belted, and those who are not. Clearly, VanPool commuters have a lot of control over their own fate in the event of an accident.

- In a crash, a fastened lap belt dissipates the deceleration forces of your body across your hips. A fastened lap belt keeps you inside the vehicle and protects you from the risks of ejection.
- A fastened shoulder belt provides additional protection. It dissipates the deceleration forces over a larger area of the body than just the hips alone. A fastened shoulder belt prevents your head and chest from striking the vehicle's interior.
- Wearing seat belts reduces injury and saves lives.

When you wear a seat belt you're showing consideration for others. You're taking positive action to remain uninjured and alive and to prevent needless tragedy for yourself, your family, your friends, and fellow passengers. And, when you urge others to fasten their seat belts, you're showing that you care a great deal about them, the VanPool Program, and its participants, who in the end, pay for the loss.

VanPool policy requires all occupants of the vanpool to have a fastened seat belt before the van moves. If you have someone in your vanpool that needs to be persuaded to wear their seat belt, please share this article with them or call your VSR for advice and assistance.



VanShare van in route to Tukwila Sounder station. Inside the van: Galye Naylor, Lori Radniecki, Shelley Harman and Keith Allen.

VanShare Rescue in Tukwila

"I'm sorry to report that it looks like a group of private vehicles and King County VanShare vans have been vandalized at the Tukwila Sounder Train Station. There's no apparent body damage but tires have been cut. Several of the vans are sitting on all four wheel rims", reported the Sound Transit Security Officer at 4:00 a.m. on November 20th of last year.

Metro Transit Rideshare Operations staff receiving this message from its 24-hour emergency service, rapidly developed a response plan – just as they've done hundreds of times during the last 22 years. However, this was no ordinary van breakdown to be addressed with ordinary contract service measures. In less than two hours, over 50 Sound Transit Sounder riders, from Tacoma, Puyallup, Sumner, Auburn

and Kent would get off the train in Tukwila expecting to make the final drive to their work site in these VanShare vans (For more information about the VanShare Program, please see the VanShare article on page 3 in this issue).

Immediately, the call went out to Rideshare Operations staff. By 5:00 a.m. six staff members and a van full of replacement tires were at the Tukwila Sounder Station. By 6:30 a.m. several more vans driven by Rideshare Operation's staff arrived to shuttle VanShare commuters from the train station to work.

VanShare customers on the train had been alerted by phone that they should expect a delay, but when they disembarked from the train there were looks of disbelief. "What do you mean we don't have to wait!?!", "We expected a mess!", "You guys are great!", "Thank you,

thank you!" "Who's your supervisor? I want to send him my thanks and mention your names". The reply: "he's right over there, in the 15 passenger van waiting to drive you to work". There was no time to bask in glory, another train full of commuters was on the way!

By the end of that morning's commute, everyone got to work on time, over 20 tires were changed at the expense of skinned and bruised knuckles, aching backs and eight pairs of very dirty hands. Those who jumped out of bed to turn a wrench, lift a tire, drive people to work and run for coffee on that cold wet November morning: Syd Pawlowski, Tom Donahue, Daphne Dilly, Diane Davis, Jim Greenwald, Cathy Blumenthal and ATC Mechanics, Mike Pullen and Mike Hall.

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downtown Bellevue to assist commuters in forming carpools and vanpools.

Careful planning has gone into timing construction activity outside peak traffic hours. However, HOV lanes may become affected periodically. The following are excellent resources for updated information on Access Downtown construction, and traffic conditions and ridesharing:

- www.accessdowntown.org.
- Traffic advisory radio at 1270 AM
- www.wsdot.wa.gov/PugetSoundTraffic/
- RideshareOnline.com

Please contact Randall Williams at RidesharePlus.Bellevue@metrokc.gov, or, (206) 263-5267 if you need additional assistance with your 'through Bellevue' commute during the construction period.

On our website:
VanPool Riders Wanted Bulletin
<http://transit.metrokc.gov>

VANPOOL VOICES

If you have questions, comments or story ideas, send them to: Rideshare Operations, YES-TR-0700, King County Metro, 400 Yesler Way, Seattle WA 98104, call (206) 263-4445 or write cathy.blumenthal@metrokc.gov.